



MEDIA RELEASE

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October 21, 2024 MEDIA CONTACT

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ACLU of Hawai'i Committed to Advancing Justice as Named Stakeholder to the Clean Slate Task Force and Penal Code Advisory Committee

HONOLULU, HI – The ACLU of Hawai'i is grateful for Chief Justice Mark E. Rectenwald's invitations to join two monumental entities this fall: the **Clean Slate Expungement Task Force** and the **Advisory Committee on Penal Code Review**.

The ACLU of Hawai'i was critical in pushing legislation to launch the **Clean Slate Expungement Task Force** under [Act 241](#). The main purpose of the Task Force is to develop a state-initiated record-clearing program by providing recommendations on proposed legislation that (1) Expands access to employment, education, and other necessities required for successful reintegration as a successful member of society; (2) promotes equity and fairness by removing barriers within the criminal legal system that disproportionately impact marginalized communities; (3) enhances public safety by adopting best practices for clearing records that have been linked to a reduction in recidivism; (4) streamlines the procedures involved in the record clearance process to reduce the time and resources required by the various state entities.

ACLU of Hawai'i Executive Director, Salmah Y. Rizvi, has appointed Policy Director, Carrie Ann Shirota, to serve on the Task Force, remarking that:

Carrie Ann is passionate about expungement and ensuring that those re-entering society are given meaningful opportunities and a second chance at life. Just last month, she organized an Expungement Clinic in Wainae and served over 100 community members in need of expungement support. Furthermore, Carrie Ann helped to push forward Act 241 and understands the policy hurdles that need to be overcome to help craft an appropriate state-wide, comprehensive process for expungement. She will work community players to help navigate this complicated process and build a workable expungement system for Hawai'i.

Ms. Shirota stated:

I look forward to working with the Clean Slate Task Force to recommend changes to our laws that will require the State to initiate a paperless expungement process harnessing technology, and to expand eligibility for record clearance. ACLU of Hawai‘i supports helping more people obtain a “Clean Slate” and increasing access to good jobs, safe and affordable housing and other life opportunities. This will strengthen families, communities and local economies throughout Hawai‘i.

With regard to the **Advisory Committee on Penal Code Review**, [Act 245](#) requires that key stakeholders coalesce on the Advisory Committee to comprehensively review the current Hawai‘i Penal Code to ensure it is: (1) consistent and proportional across classes of offenses; (2) aligned with national best practices and utilizing evidence-based strategies; (3) cost effective in advancing penal interests and providing equal justice to all in our community; and (4) responsive to offenders suffering from mental illness.

Ms. Rizvi has appointed Legal Director, Wookie Kim, to serve on the Committee, stating:

As a leading civil rights litigator in the State of Hawai‘i, Wookie has supported legislation focused on penal code reform. He has testified on how our society can be better served if certain arrests are diverted to citations for low-level offenses. Through his work with impact litigation clients, he has discerned how sentencing disparities impact the everyday lives of Hawaii’s residents. His unique civil rights lens will be an asset to this committee centered on criminal justice reform.

Mr. Kim remarked:

I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the process of reviewing the Hawai‘i Penal Code to ensure that it is more just and fair for the people of Hawai‘i.

The work of this Advisory Committee will culminate with a report and proposed legislation for the 2026 Hawai‘i State Legislature. This comprehensive review presents an excellent opportunity to reform our penal laws and ensure they remain effective and fair.

The ACLU of Hawai‘i is honored to join both prestigious initiatives and will continue to fight for civil rights and human dignity for all those living in Hawai‘i.

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